

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 4, 17, and 18 are requested to be cancelled.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, and 19 are currently being amended.

Claims 35 and 36 are being added.

This amendment adds, changes and deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-3, 5-15, 19, 23, 24, and 26-36 are now pending in this application. Claims 3, 8-11, 14, and 26-31 stand withdrawn.

An Office Action was issued by the Patent Office on July 26, 2004. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 15, 17, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 5,988,270, issued to Chevallier ("Chevallier"). Claims 32-34 were allowed by the Examiner. Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. In addition, the Examiner indicated that claims 4-7, 12-13, 19, and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

While Applicants strongly disagree with these rejections, Applicants are submitting these amendments in an attempt to expedite prosecution of this application. Applicants are submitting this amendment without prejudice and reserve the right to reapproach the issues and rejections in a related application.

Applicants have amended the claims in accordance with the Examiner's comments. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 4 and claim 4 has been canceled. Thus, claim 1, as amended, contains all of the limitations of the base claim and claim 4. Newly added claim 35 contains the limitation of claim 19 as well as claim 1, the independent claim from which claim 19 is based. Claim 17 has been canceled. Claims 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 14 have been amended to correct their dependence to reflect the cancellation of claim 4. Newly added claim 36 includes the limitation of claim 23 (which depends from claim 19). Claim 19 has been amended to address a typographical error.

Because Applicants have amended the claims as the Examiner suggested, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance given the Examiner's statements. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

As Applicants believe claim 1 is currently allowable and is a generic claim, upon allowance of claim 1, Applicants will be entitled to consideration of the claims 3, 8-11, 14, 18, and 21, which are drawn to the additional non-elected species and which depend from claim 1.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1450. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 06-1450. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers

submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extension fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1450.

Respectfully submitted,

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